KINGTOWN MILL Lower Kingtown Road, approximately .5 mile east of intersection with the Pittstown-Clinton Road Kingtown vicinity Hunterdon County New Jersey HAER No. NJ-118

HAER NJ 10-KINTN,

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HAER NJ 10-KINTN,

KINGTOWN MILL

HAER No. NJ-118

Location:

Lower Kingtown Road, approximately .5 mile east of intersection

with the Pittstown-Clinton Road

Kingtown vicinity Hunterdon County

New Jersey

USGS Pittstown, N.J. Quadrangle

Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.505070.4493490

Date of Construction:

1827

Engineer/Architect:

Unknown

Present Owner:

Elf Atochem North America, Inc.

2000 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103

Present Use:

Vacant

Significance:

The Kingtown Mill is an example of nineteenth century, small industrial construction in rural New Jersey. The mill is an unusual example of an early nineteenth-century manufacturing facility that was later adapted to other purposes but retains many of its original features. As a property type, this structure is rare in New Jersey because it was built for the manufacture of linseed oil. Although not all oil mills were recorded, there appear to have been relatively few of them in New Jersey in the nineteenth century, and in 1860 there were only two other oil mills listed in the industrial census. It is historically significant as the last operating water-powered linseed oil mill in Hunterdon County, and one of the last in the state of New Jersey. The Myers House and the

Warehouse are contributing features of the Mill site.

Project Information:

The Myers Property Site was placed on the United States Environmen-Environmental Protection Agency National Priorities list in 1983. The building's remediation may include decontamination and demolition and will cause an adverse effect on the structures. Recordation of these structures was requested to mitigate the adverse effect of remediation.

Lauren C. Archibald, Architectural Historian

Stacy E. Spies, Architectural Historian

Mary E. Dieter, Historian

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66 N. Main Street, Cranbury, N.J. 08512

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. History of Linseed Oil Processing and the Distillation of Cider

Hunterdon County was a leading area of agricultural production in New Jersey in the nineteenth century. Grains, corn, soy beans, potatoes, tomatoes, several hay species, and other crops along with poultry and dairy farms were successful local and commercial agricultural products. Flax was one of the most important crops grown in the region. Although never grown on a large scale, every homestead and farm had a few acres under cultivation for the fibers needed to weave the family's clothing (Schmidt 1973:95). Flax was used to create fiber for rope and twine as well as homespun, fine linen and "linsey woolsey," a combination of linen and wool threads. Cotton replaced flax as the source of cloth fiber in the first half of the nineteenth century, but the crop was still grown for its seed. The seed had been a less valuable by-product of flax culture in the eighteenth century, but it became an important source of oil for lubrication and the production of paints in the nineteenth. Hunterdon County contained the largest number of linseed oil mills in the state for as long as those statistics were recorded (Weiss and Weiss 1960). Linseed oil from flaxseed was pressed at the Kingtown Mill during the second and third quarters, and during most of the fourth quarter, of the nineteenth century.

Fruit trees were another historically significant crop, as well as a source of income for the early settlers. European grains brought over to produce fermented beverages initially proved difficult to adapt to conditions and in the new colonies. Fruit trees, especially apple trees, flourished in the new land and every farmer with the acreage could plant an orchard and produce a surplus in a relatively short time. Hunterdon County had always been a center for nineteenth century agricultural production in northern New Jersey and for a time it was the largest producer of peaches and apples in the state (Schmidt 1973). Pressing the apples created the base for a series of beverages suitable for consumption by the entire family. It was also one of the easiest and most profitable ways to transport and sell the produce of fruit trees. Franklin Township (in which the Kingtown Mill is located) participated with the rest of the county in the fruit-growing industry. The first of many peach orchards in Franklin was reportedly planted in 1846 setting the stage for the local boom in the trade of this fruit. By 1882, "the continuous orchards near Quakertown totaled 23,000 trees" (Franklin Township Tercentary Committee 1964). Apple brandy or applejack was produced at the Kingtown Mill from the late nineteenth century into the twentieth century.

Franklin Township suffered all the vagaries of the orchard industry at the close of the nineteenth century and turned to other sources of income. It followed the rest of the county in creating a broader based, diversified economy. Among the local successes during the first half of the twentieth century were grocery stores, a freight yard mill, a pancake flour plant and feed stores, a lumber company, and agricultural implement dealers (Franklin Township Tercentary Committee 1964). The Kingtown Mill went through its greatest number of uses during this period, being a

distillery with custom feed grinding on the side, an applejack plant, and a fertilizer and chemical plant.

1. Flax culture and linseed oil production

The following section contains a brief discussion of eighteenth and nineteenth century flax culture in New Jersey to provide the background for the production of linseed oil at the Kingtown Mill.

The sowing of flax fields occurred in the early spring. The seed was broadcast by hand and had to be sown thickly to ensure thin flax stalks. These produced thinner fibers for spinning finer and more valuable linen. The production of textiles from flax was an extremely labor intensive process. Flax seed was a by-product of the process, as the emphasis for the early settlers was on the value of the flax as a source of fiber for spinning and weaving. The best quality flax was put through the entire process by hand. After the flax began to show signs of ripening, the farmers pulled the flax out of the ground by its roots. One quarter acre of flax pulled was considered a day's work in the region. Depending on the size of the flax fields, a farmer hosted a "flax frolic" on one or two days of the harvesting season to gather his neighbors and farmhands together to help pull his flax crop. The frolics were working/social affairs and invitations were sent out to entire families. At the frolics there were contests between teams of pullers to pull the most flax in a day. Anyone lagging behind was left a patch of flax to pull called "the lazy acre" (Schmidt 1939:6). If not tying up the sheaves in the field, the neighborhood women prepared the evening meal for all who attended. It was a cooperative activity involving the entire community. These working parties took place for several days at a stretch, the workers and their families going from house to house, with everyone working to get the flax crop harvested.

Flax threshing took place after the other grain crops had been harvested. There were several methods of threshing flax: planks of wood set at an angle, beating the bolls with blocks of wood on the barn floor, and in one account wagon tongues were used to separate the seed heads from the flax stalks (Schmidt 1939:7). The stalks went through many more labor intensive steps before reaching the spinning wheel and looms. The process centered on breaking and separating the tough outer sheathing of the flax stalk from the fibers inside. All the work was done by hand to ensure the best quality and most value from the crop. This also helped ensure that the seed was in good condition when it arrived at the oil mill. The seed had to be free of mildew and cleaned of extraneous material before it could be pressed into oil. Not all of the seed came straight from a farmer's flax field. Flax seed was accepted by store owners as payment for goods and often it was the linseed oil mill wagons that made the rounds to the stores and delivered the seed to the mill. The third floor of the Kingtown Mill was used to store the seed and if the seed arrived wet at the mill it was spread out to dry before being sieved and cleaned. The mill has a hoist overhang at the east gable end for bringing the containers of seed and supplies up to the third floor.

The flax seed was ground to begin the process of crushing the seed and extracting the oil. After grinding, the seed was heated in flat roasting pans to facilitate the flow of the oil as it was pressed. The heated oily mass was placed in tough, woven linen bags and placed in the press. The oil ran out of the base of the press and was caught in pans underneath the press. After the first pressing was over, the oil cake left in the bags was ground and pressed again, producing a cloudier, inferior grade of oil. After the second pressing, the cake was often sold for feed, but according to mill policy, the cake was sometimes pressed for a third time. Oil cake after the third pressing lost its value as a source of protein and was broken up and used as manure (Keller 1908; Schmidt 1939; Scheetz 1917; Weiss and Weiss 1960).

The exact location of the oil press machinery in the mill is unknown; no diagrams of Joseph King's 1827 mill have been recovered. One source of information regarding mill design comes from the 1870 Industrial Census of New Jersey, which lists Joseph King's mill having one waterwheel operating "2 run of stone," or two sets of grinding stones. However, there is a statement by Mrs. Stacy B. Pursel regarding the Kingtown Mill which was recorded in the proceedings of the Bucks County Historical Society (Scheetz 1917):

My grandfather and great-grandfather were manufacturers of linseed oil. I am the owner of an old abandoned oil mill situated at Spring Mills near Milford, N.J., which was built by my grandfather Joseph King, during the latter part of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century. ... My uncle Joseph King also owned an oil mill situated at Pittstown, N.J. [the center of Pittstown is two miles southwest of the mill], which he operated up to the time of his death in 1886. Both of these oil mills were each equipped with two stones grinding the flax seed, very much as the old-fashioned gristmills ground grain with burr stones. After the seed was ground it was put in sheet-iron pans and placed over an oven fire and heated, it was then transferred to canvas bags and put under the press. The oil was pressed out by means of a revolving wooden shaft with arms extending from its side, as the shaft revolved the arms caught two wooden logs each about 12 feet long which were lifted about three feet when the arm let go and dropped the logs alternately on the wedges of the press. After the cake was taken out of the press it was again ground converting it into cake-meal, and then sold to the farmers for feeding cattle (Scheetz 1917:728).

From this account it seems that the flax seed was ground between two horizontal grinding stones or "muller stones" (Eastman 1968:109). The bottom bed stone was stationary and the upper burr stone with its carved grinding surface revolved on a vertical axle. Muller stones were commonly used in United States oil mills through 1870. After 1870 many converted to processing the seed through a series of chilled-iron rolls set in stacks with the seed taking a serpentine route through four or five rollers (Eastman 1968:109-110).

Nineteenth century linseed oil mills operated as self-contained manufactories. With the exception of the races for waterpower, all the equipment and the materials necessary for the production of the oil were housed inside the mill building (Keller 1908; Scheetz 1917; Weiss and Weiss 1960). Although only a drive shaft and deteriorated elements of the waterwheel were observed during field investigations in 1995, it is possible to visualize how the power train may have operated based on an architectural analysis of the Kingtown Mill and comparative studies. Comparative study may permit the construction on an analog model for how the Kingtown Mill was internally organized. The gearing pattern used in a mill depended on several site-specific variables, and each mill was to some extent unique. The most significant variables on mill design were: 1) the technical expertise of the millwright; 2) the water power available at the site and; 3) whether the water source was constant or affected by seasonal fluctuations. In some cases the miller's and mill builder's country of origin would also be a factor in determining mill design.

An analog for the Kingtown Mill is the Bethlehem Oil Mill, built in 1765 by the Moravian Brethren in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (Litchfield et al. 1984). The Bethlehem Mill was multifunctional (it served as an oil, groat, snuff, and tanning mill) but the point of significant comparison is that both structures ran two run of stones. Furthermore, Mrs. Pursel's description of the Kingtown Mill tends to agree with the process of linseed oil production used at Bethlehem (Litchfield et al. 1984:43-51). Fortunately, detailed drawings exist which are attributed to the gearing design employed at the Bethlehem Mill (Litchfield et al. 1984). The millwright who designed the Bethlehem Mill had worked in mills in Denmark and Germany. This particular millwright was recognized as an expert in his field and he designed and built mills throughout eastern Pennsylvania. While the Kingtown Mill would, out of necessity, have basic mechanisms in common with many other types of mills in the region, the Bethlehem Mill provides a general model for oil mill design. The principal difference between the Bethlehem and Kingtown mills lay in that fact that the Bethlehem Mill was an undershot mill, a design decision based on the power available from the Monocacy Creek, and a point which underscores the importance of water source on mill design. The waterwheel was mounted in the center of the structure, with the drive (or waterwheel) shaft passing through an interior wall to the "coghole" or machinery space on the ground floor of the mill's interior. A series of face gears and lantern (or stone) gears directed the power up to the second floor to run a separate pair of grinding stones.

The Kingtown Mill may have been configured in a similar fashion. The waterwheel is known to have been mounted at ground level (the first floor) in a wheel pit separate from the main block on the south side of the building. The drive shaft passed through an arched opening in the stone foundation wall to the main room on the ground floor. The "coghole" would have been situated in that room to carry power to the second floor, where the two run of stones would have been located. There is no evidence of where the grinding stones were located on the second floor. The only extant elements to the drive train were deteriorated fragments of a face gear found by the tail race outside the building during a 1995 archaeological excavation.

As stated above, the pressing method Mrs. Pursel describes for the Kingtown Mill was used in the Bethlehem Oil Mill in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Litchfield et al. 1984). The crushed seed mash was shoveled into tough but porous bags woven of hair or linen. The bags were placed in between pairs of iron plates set on either side of the large, wooden wedges. Each inner iron plate would be forced outward against its mate as the pressing wedge was pounded down into its well, squeezing the bags of linseed between them. The oil would drain down into containers beneath the iron plate presses. In some cases, the iron plates were perforated to facilitate the flow of oil from the bag of seed mash (Weiss and Weiss 1960:17). After the pressing, the release wedge was struck to free all the other elements of the press for another run. If Mrs Pursel's account is correct this was the method used to express oil at the Kingtown Mill.

Hydraulic presses were available and in use by the 1850's, but they were expensive and it appears the Kings decided not to install them in their oil mill (Eastman 1968:107). The wooden wedge presses produced "cold-drawn" or "cold pressed" linseed oil which was the clearest and best quality oil. Rollers and hydraulic presses produced "hot pressed" oil which was cloudier and of lesser quality. None of the consulted accounts of nineteenth century linseed oil mills mention hydraulic presses being used in Hunterdon County or across the Delaware River in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, but all describe a version of the wedge presses (Keller 1908; Schmidt 1939; Scheetz 1907, 1917). Banks of hydraulic presses were used in linseed oil mills in New Jersey after 1900. These were large-scale, commercial producers with from six to 64 presses. A mill in Edgewater, New Jersey had 190 hydraulic presses in 1909, and was the largest oil mill in the United States at that time (Eastman 1968:108).

The wedge presses in the Kingtown Mill may have been located on the ground floor. Enough vertical space had to be provided to raise and drop the "twelve feet long" stamping posts or stocks another few feet, requiring perhaps a 15 foot clearance (Scheetz 1917). The ceiling of the ground floor of the mill structure is approximately 12 feet high. The mechanism for operating the stocks may have been on the ground floor with the stocks being raised and lowered through an opening in the first level of flooring. When the interior of the existing structure was examined in 1995, no opening was found through the first level of flooring leading to the second story. This suggests that if it was present, it had been closed up and floored over. The later occupants of the mill building may have sealed up all the openings in the floors, but these repairs should have been visible upon inspection of the structural elements of the building.

Kingtown Mill also functioned as a grist mill beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century. The building's construction layout followed that of traditional mill buildings, with a heavy timber support system for the second floor, and a hoist system on the third floor to pull up meal and perhaps the flax seed. The third floor probably served as a storage area for the raw materials. Therefore, the Kingtown Mill was able to incorporate both types of milling.

The western half of the mill structure was added during the mid-nineteenth century. It was during this time that mill production nearly doubled. No information has been obtained that indicates that the original (i.e. eastern) half of the mill structure was altered by this addition. However, the western addition to the mill was built over the southern half of the tailrace, which exits the west wall of the wheel pit in the eastern half of the building. The entire tailrace may have been modified at this time. Evidence for the tailrace consists of a partial stone wall, and a line of rough-hewn logs, exiting the north wall of the mill and leading to the head of race pond approximately 35 feet to the north. The structural relationship of these two elements remains unclear, and they may represent different stages of modification to the tailrace.

2. Applejack and Cider Distillation

An applejack distillery was installed in the Kingtown Mill by the early 1890s during Samuel C. Stevenson's ownership of the property. Linseed oil processing had ceased to be a profitable enterprise by this time, but the processing and distillation of spirits from the local apple crop was still an important industry in the county. The following is a brief history and description of distilling applejack in late nineteenth and early twentieth century New Jersey.

Applejack, apply brandy, cider brandy, Cider Royal and the infamous "Jersey Lightening" are the sobriquets for the drink that warmed and refreshed the New Jersey farmers and their families for 200 years. Applejack was the drink of the countryside and was served at local taverns throughout the state. Advertisements and account books chronicling applejack production by commercial distilleries exist from the eighteenth century, but production on the local level had almost certainly taken place since the first apple orchards were planted in the late 1600s. Traditional European grains used for the making of alcoholic drinks did not do well in the early years of settlement, but apple and other fruit trees thrived. Pressing the fruit was one of the best ways of preserving, transporting, and selling the orchard yield, although the primary use of the fruit was for drinking. Different forms of the pressed juices were offered at the table at all meals and on all occasions. As stated above, the pulling crews at the flax frolic were kept well supplied with a form of the beverage. Beside the flagons of applejack could be found cider in its soft and hard versions, and a milder brew named ciderkin which was made for the children to drink. This last drink was made from water poured over the remains of the apples then putting them through the press one more time (Weiss 1954:16).

The following is taken from <u>The History of Applejack in New Jersey</u> and recounts the nineteenth and early twentieth century process of distilling applejack:

After fermentation the hard cider is allowed to settle and the clear fermented liquid is racked off or filtered or centrifuged. The sediment is made up principally of yeast cells, pectins and albumens. The hard cider is then either distilled at once or after a long storage. Most of the stills in use are the so-called pot stills. These

have been utilized from early times... Frequently they were in pairs called doublers, each bricked up close to the other. One was a large still and the second one was smaller. There was a fire box under the large one but not the smaller one. The fermented cider, containing about six per cent alcohol, was placed in the large still that was usually heated by a wood fire. From the first still the vapors, containing about fifty per cent alcohol, entered the second adjoining still where the heat of condensation continued the vaporization. The vapors from the second still were conducted in to a worm surrounded by cool water, where they were condensed into a distillate containing from fifty to seventy-five per cent alcohol (100 to 150 proof). This distillate went into a receiving tank, while the "low wines," those containing twenty-five per cent or less of alcohol, were run into another vat for redistillation in the smaller still. (Weiss 1954:79-81)

B. Specific History of the Mill

The industrial development of the Myers Property Site began in the early nineteenth century when a linseed oil mill, historically known as the Kingtown Mill, was built by Joseph King in 1827. The milling operation expanded and diversified into grain milling and cider production throughout the nineteenth and into the first quarter of the twentieth century. Significantly, this mill is known to have been the last operating water-powered linseed oil mill in Hunterdon County, and one of the last in New Jersey.

References to the chain of title for the land upon which the mill stands are in the Hunterdon County Hall of Records, Flemington, New Jersey.

| <u>Tenure</u> | Name of Owner | Acquisition Citation |
|---------------|----------------------------|---|
| -1811 | Thomas Twining | See Hunt. Co. Deed 18/501 |
| 1811-1834 | Joseph King | Hunt. Co. Deed 18/501 |
| 1834-1869 | William L. King | N.J. Will 4142J |
| 1869-1870 | William L. King Estate | Hunt. Co. Letters of Administration 6/179 |
| 1870-1886 | Joseph King | Hunt. Co. Deed 145/201 |
| 1886-1888 | Joseph King Estate | Hunt. Co. Letters of Administration 7/121 |
| 1888-1892 | Samuel C. Stevenson | See Hunt. Co. Deed 236/239 |
| 1892-1893 | Samuel C. Stevenson Estate | Hunt. Co. Will 17/79 |
| 1893 | Sylvester Cooley | Hunt. Co. Deed 236/239 |
| 1893 | Henry Stevenson et al. | Hunt. Co. Deed 236/241 |
| 1893-1894 | William T. Stires | Hunt. Co. Deed 237/6 |
| 1894- | John R. Krout | Hunt. Co. Deed 240/153 |
| 1927 | Bernice Krout | See Hunt. Co. Deed 369/565 |
| 1927-1932 | W.A. Allen Company | Hunt. Co. Deed 369/565 |

| 1932-1933 | Flemington National Bank and Trust Company | Hunt. Co. Deed 393/491 | |
|---|---|------------------------|--|
| 1933-1940 | Lord Stirling Distilleries, Inc. | Hunt. Co. Deed 397/395 | |
| 1940 | Federal Trust Company | Hunt. Co. Deed 425/256 | |
| 1940-1942 | Harry Weisman | Hunt. Co. Deed 425/255 | |
| 1942-1945 | Elko Chemical Works, Inc. | Hunt. Co. Deed 433/95 | |
| 1945-1947 | Pennsylvania Salt Manufacturing | Hunt. Co. Deed 448/240 | |
| | Co. | | |
| 1947-1971 | Associated Terminal Corporation | Hunt. Co. Deed 468/169 | |
| 1971-1993 | Cornelius O. Myers | Hunt. Co. Deed 748/914 | |
| 1993- | Elf Atochem North America, Inc. | | |
| (Modified from Porter 1989: Table 2.1, 2-3) | | | |

The King family was among the early settlers of the region with family members moving into the area in the early 1700's. They were English Quakers who had emigrated from Holland to the New World settlements (Snell 1881:430). The lands on which the mill and nearby Myers house are situated were first purchased by Thomas Twining between the years 1797 and 1807, and were incorporated into a larger, 150-acre tract owned by Twining. A fulling, grist, and saw mill were built and operated by Twining on these lands. The grist mill still stands at the corner of Lower Kingtown Road and the Pittstown-Clinton Road, approximately .25 mile west of the Kingtown Mill.

Twining sold his property and milling concerns to Joseph King, a West Jersey Quaker, in 1811. Joseph and his son William are known to have built a linseed oil mill somewhere on the 150-acre property by 1812. Where this structure was erected remains unknown. The Kings found it necessary to expand their linseed milling operation, and in 1827 built a second mill in Franklin Township in the Kingtown vicinity (i.e. the east half of the Kingtown Mill) and "conducted both" of these oil mills simultaneously after the completion of the second mill. They also built a third mill near Milford in Alexandria Township, Hunterdon County (Snell 1881: 441, 523; Scheetz 1917: 728; Weiss and Weiss 1960: 12).

By the 1850s the Kingtown Mill significantly expanded its operation. According to industrial census and additional documentary evidence, this mill diversified into a grist mill as well as an oil mill, and doubled its productive output. In the industrial schedules of the 1850 census, the younger King was listed as the operator of the family "oil factory." In 1850 the census listed the capital invested in the water-powered mill at \$4,600; the raw material was listed as 1,500 bushels flaxseed worth \$2,160, and the products were 3,000 gallons of linseed oil worth \$2,250 and 1,500 bushels oil cake worth \$450 (U.S. Census of N.J. 1850).

The production of linseed oil at the mill doubled from 1850 to 1860. This decade was when the grist mill operation was installed in the oil mill building, according to the 1860 industrial census,

but the census does not indicate what, if anything, was installed to increase the amount of oil being produced. Competition from cotton and other grain crops had made the labor-intensive flax culture obsolete, and by 1850 flax was being produced mainly for its seed and for twine manufacture. King's mill was the largest in Hunterdon County after 1860, and loss of competitors may have increased King's access to the local supply of flax seed. Economic incentives for growth and survival of this particular mill were also provided by the United States Government. "Bounties," an early form of farm subsidies, were paid to farmers to grow certain crops before, during, and after the Civil War. Flax growing survived and temporarily revived during this period when the price for oil and fiber rose. However, after the war, flax declined in value again and by 1890 there were only a few acres of flax being grown in the state (Schmidt 1973:76).

The 1860 industrial census listed statistics regarding the oil mill and a separate grain mill operating on the premises. The census listed the capital invested in the water-powered oil mill at \$2,000, the raw material was listed as 3,500 bushels flaxseed worth \$5,000, and the products were 7,000 gallons of linseed oil and 3,500 bushels oil cake worth \$7,000. The census listed the capital invested in the water-powered grain mill at \$1,500; the raw material was listed as 9,000 bushels grains worth \$5,000, and the products were merchant work worth \$5,000 (U.S. Census of N.J. 1860). Many of the oil mills operating in New Jersey in the nineteenth century were listed in federal and state census records, state proceedings minutes, gazetteers, and directories (Weiss and Weiss 1960:10-14). There appear to have been relatively few of them the size of the Kingtown Mill in New Jersey in the nineteenth century. In 1860, there were only three oil mills (including Kingtown) listed in the industrial census (Weiss and Weiss 1960:14).

In 1869 William King died intestate (Hunt. Co. Letters of Administration 6 179) and the lands were put up for sale. His son Joseph purchased holdings in Union and Franklin townships, including the Kingtown Mill (Hunt. Co. Deed 145 201). In 1870, the industrial census listed the capital invested in the oil mill at \$12,000, it was powered by one 25-horsepower water wheel, and machinery included two run of stone. Raw material was listed as 4,000 bushels of flaxseed worth \$9,000 and the products were 8,000 gallons of linseed oil worth \$8,000 and 3,000 bushels oil cake worth \$2,700. It is noteworthy that in 1870 the oil mill was the only one inoperation in Hunterdon County, the former center of the rural linseed oil industry (Porter 1989:2-8) and in 1880 it was the only mill of this type in New Jersey.

Many of the researched sources claim a mill at Frenchtown as the last of the old oil mills, but that mill is listed as running only into the 1870's (Scheetz 1917). In 1880, the industrial census listed the capital invested in the Kingtown Mill at \$14,000, it was powered by one 24-horsepower overshot waterwheel, the raw material was listed as flaxseed worth \$9,000, and the products were linseed oil and oil cake worth \$9,500 (U.S. Census of New Jersey 1870; 1880). Joseph King operated the mill until his death in 1886.

In 1888 the mill and lands were sold by the King's heirs to Samuel C. Stevenson. Stevenson, who owned the mill between 1888-1892, was the last owner to have used the mill for linseed oil production. He apparently decided it was not economically feasible to continue, and did not refurbish the mill with the latest oil processing technology. Production of oil had probably ceased by 1891. The mill was recorded as a "Paint Mill, Not in Use" in an 1891 survey of water power in New Jersey (Vermeule 1892:200). The grist milling operation continued under the Krout family ownership and into the twentieth century. It is not known which owner after W.A. Allen removed the mill works from the building. None of the linseed oil processing equipment has been found on the property. Stevenson initiated at least three major changes to the property before his death in 1892. First, a house, now known as the Myers house, was either built or moved onto the property; second, the mill was converted into a distillery; and third, Stevenson sold a strip of land on the property to the Lehigh Valley Railroad who built a spur running from Pittstown to the railroad's main line in Hamden.

The Kingtown Mill was used as an applejack distillery from the early 1890's to Prohibition, then again from 1934 to 1940 (Porter 1989: 2-9; 2-12). The mill continued to be used for distilling apple brandy by various individuals until 1927, when it was sold to the W.A. Allen Company, who used the property to formulate agricultural pesticides and fertilizers.

The Krout family owned the property from 1894 to 1927. At this time the Pittstown Branch, which connected Pittstown with the Lehigh Valley's main line near Hamden, ran along the north side of the distillery (Pugh and Downing 1902). Porter states that John R. Krout turned over management of the distillery to his nephew, John Sloff, sometime after 1900. The building was operating as a distillery under Krout's ownership; however, the 1914 Hunterdon County Directory lists Sloff as a miller and does not mention the distillery at "King's Station" (Wilmer Atkinson Co. 1914). None of the contemporary Hunterdon distilleries were included in the 1914 "Classified Business Directory" section. The Temperance movement was politically strong by this time and may have had some affect on who listed their buildings as sources of alcohol.

An informant, Mrs. Evelyn Lawson, moved into Kingtown in 1922 and lives near the Kingtown Mill. She recalls entering the mill building on several occasions and remembers the applejack distillery on the first floor of the structure and the grist mill operation still in use on the second floor (Mrs. Evelyn Lawson, personal communication, 1995). This helps confirm Mrs. Pursel's statement in 1917 about the "old-fashioned gristmills" technique. The grinding mechanisms functioned with sets of horizontal stones on a floor above the water power equipment. The structure of the second floor is also built to bear the weight of the grinding process. If the grinding apparatus was present in 1924 it appears to confirm that the Kingtown Mill did not convert to roller processing, but remained dependent on its waterwheel and stones to its closing.

Accounts of local landmarks and activities of note were recorded in a small book published for Franklin Township's tercentenary. It gives information about the mill's later activities and states

Walter Allen was working at the mill in 1923-24, "making fertilizers, chemicals and doing custom feed grinding at this location" (Franklin Township Tercentenary Committee 1964). With Mrs. Lawson's statement, this provides a possible date for the duration of milling activity at the site, although at a much reduced scale. It also provides information how, when Prohibition was enacted, John Krout's nephew left the business and Allen probably took over, providing the connection between himself and Bernice Krout (Porter 1989:2-12). She was listed as owner of the property in 1927 when it was conveyed to the W.A. Allen Company.

Lord Stirling Distilleries, Inc. purchased the property in 1933, one year before Prohibition was lifted. They obtained a license for manufacturing and selling apple brandy on June 2, 1934. The brand names for their applejack were King's Mills, Lord Stirling and Blue Bird. Weiss's informant for this property was a previous owner and the informant stated the still used was the "doubler" type, the large still having a capacity of 250 gallons and the smaller a capacity of 90 gallons (Weiss 1954:150-152). The King's Station/Lord Stirling Distillery was one of many distilleries in New Jersey. In 1897, 150,817 gallons of apple brandy were officially produced and taxed in the state. In 1936, 362,457 gallons were on the tax rolls (Weiss 1954:77). No specific production records were found for the Kingtown distillery.

To be used as a distillery the mill building must have been equipped with at least one cider press capable of handling quantities adequate for commercial sales. It probably would not have needed more than one still, especially if the still was a doubler as recorded by Weiss. There would have been storage bins for the apples, room for the baskets, barrels and other containers. If the distillery was bottling its own merchandise on site there would have been machinery for that function, although the Lord Stirling Distilleries called the mill building its Fruit Distillery Number 6 meaning it was a producer of their product and perhaps not a bottling facility. None of the equipment from either distillery period has been found on the property.

Archaeological excavations along the south wall of the mill in 1995 demonstrate that the eastern terminus of the headrace had been significantly modified, probably during the early twentieth century. Extensive excavations for construction of massive concrete piers had been made along the southern exterior wall of the mill. It is believed that these piers were laid to support a sluice to carry water into the wheel pit. This twentieth-century modification has obliterated any evidence of an earlier raceway or sluice arrangement into the wheelpit of the mill.

Poured cement technology was also employed in the construction of a scale pit along the east wall of the Kingtown Mill. The pit caps and partially incorporates an earlier stone feature that can be dated to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. This stone wall has been seriously compromised by the later construction of the cement scale pit, but it is assumed to have had a similar function due to its location beneath the hoist at the east end of the mill. Construction of the poured cement scale pit post-dates this stone wall, and probably relates to the operation of the mill building as a distillery, dating to the early to mid-twentieth century.

The upgrades to the mill exterior noted above must have engaged fairly heavy capital outlays and were obviously geared towards improving the efficiency of the operation. Modifications to the headrace would ostensibly improve available water power, and new or improved scales would result in greater control over the acquisition of raw materials (e.g. fruit and grains). These modifications may have been incremental and performed by various owners operating the mill as a distillery. However, the use of similar technologies (i.e. poured cement) and costs involved perhaps indicate corporate control of the property by Lord Stirling Distilleries, Inc.

More substantial modifications to the property occurred with a significant reorientation of industrial activity on the site towards chemical manufacturing. Beginning in the 1920's and again after 1942, the practice of agro-industrial chemical production resulted in serious alterations to the site. A partially open cinder block and cement addition was placed on the west end of the mill in the mid-1940's. Ironically, the Kingtown Mill probably received its most damaging modification long after it had been abandoned as an industrial facility. At some point after the property was purchased by Cornelius Myers in 1971, the headrace was filled in and the slate roof removed from the east half of the mill structure. Removal of the roof has caused serious deterioration of the building's superstructure to the point that many areas have lost their structural integrity.

PART II. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

The Kingtown Mill is an unusual example of a manufacturing facility which has been expanded for changing production needs during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. As an industrial structure, the open spaces and the wheel pit in the mill are good examples of nineteenth century construction techniques, both in heavy timber framing and stone masonry. Heavy timber framing in residential construction is less common after the first quarter of the nineteenth century, but persisted in mills and other industrial structures. Architecturally, the main block of the mill retains many original features. The earliest portion, apparently the northeast component of the building, still maintains original features, including stonework and heavy timber framing on the inside. Like most mills, this was unornamented and followed vernacular traditions (Reynolds 1970). Although the mill was intended for industrial use, it nevertheless was built with an aesthetic sensibility, as witnessed by the flat headers over door and window openings and the carved datestone bearing "1827" on the northeast corner. When the mill was enlarged, some interior spaces were embellished with wood wainscoting, beaded siding, and molded, decorative trim surrounds.

Note: The roof and interior of the mill structure are currently in an advanced stage of collapse and the building is structurally unsound. Therefore, interior examination was not possible at the time of documentation. However, thorough documentation was undertaken in 1995 and the form and condition of the interior at that time will be included here.

a. Kingtown Mill

The Kingtown Mill is a 97' x 55', four-story frame structure located at the bend in Lower Kingtown Road, beside the Cakepoulin Creek. The mill is banked into the rising hillside. The first floor (foundation level) is of stone and mortar construction. The three upper stories are of wood construction. Doorways on the banked second floor open to the south, facing Lower Kingtown Road. An overhang hoist extends from the east gable end; doorways in line with the hoist open onto each floor of the building. A poured concrete scale pit is found directly beneath the hoist on the ground at the east end of the structure.

Several stages of construction are evident in the mill structure. Stylistic differences in stone construction of the first floor indicated that the mill was originally half as long as its current dimensions. The eastern half of the mill was constructed first and contains a cornerstone bearing the date "1827." The western half of the building was probably built in the mid-nineteenth century. Subsequent modifications to the exterior of the mill include the addition of poured concrete pads along the west wall (ca. 1946 as per inscriptions in the concrete), and an addition to the southeast corner of the mill with a post-1940s concrete block foundation. The date for this addition at the southeast corner is unclear: a photograph reportedly taken during the 1940s shows the southeastern corner of the building as having a concrete block foundation, however, a photograph dating from 1952 in Weiss 1954 shows the southeastern corner of the building being supported by wood posts.

Neither the headrace or tailrace are visible on the ground surface outside the mill although the course of the raceway is recorded on the 1873 Beers county atlas. The raceway, which originated over 3,000 feet to the west near the intersection of Lower Kingtown Road and Cakepoulin Creek, is still clearly visible along the north shoulder of Lower Kingtown Road west of the mill.

Most of the roof's sheathing on the eastern side of the building is missing. Part of the roof, on the northwest side of the structure, is still covered with grey slate shingles. The gable roof of the main block has a molded cornice with box returns. The structure rests on a high sandstone foundation which incorporates the first floor of the building. This main block was built in two separate construction phases, with the joint between the two sections visible in both the stone and timber portions of the northern side of the mill. The visible stonework on the foundation/first floor is laid with mortar. On the larger northeastern section of the building, stone has been cut, while the northwestern section consists of uncut, darker stone, possibly from a different quarry. The two sections appear to have been built as individual building units, and wood cladding is discontinuous.

The principal openings on the ground floor, including windows and doors, feature flat stone arch lintels. The lintel on the double-width door on the north side, and on one of the doors on the main east gable end also have keystones in the center. Openings on the ground floor have been

filled in or boarded up. On the north side the stonework and wood siding can be viewed from the exterior; the south side has been built into the bank. On the north side, the two sections of the main block have a total of five bays on the second floor, and windows are the double-hung, multi-light sash type. The windows have molded wood caps and wood surrounds.

The east side of the main block is the main gable end facing the road. An overhang for the former hoist still stands in its gable peak, with two-part entries to each floor centered below the hoist. This elevation has three bays which are symmetrical on the second and third floors; the entries in the center are flanked by nine-over-six-light wood sash windows.

The later frame addition on the south side of the main block was built on top of the wheel pit, which housed the waterwheel at ground floor level. Like the main block, it is built of stone up to the first floor, and capped with a second story with a standing-seam metal roof. This frame superstructure, which runs along the south side of the building and extends past the east elevation, was apparently added after the main block was constructed. At the southeast corner, a concrete block foundation extends beyond the gable end of the building, and it now encloses what had previously been an exterior wall on the southeast corner of the building. The roof is pierced by two small chimneys. Fenestration is irregularly spaced on this addition, and the window and door openings are boarded up.

A similar frame superstructure has been added to the west gable end of the building. It has a standing-seam metal shed roof with a flat-roofed second story added at a later date. Outside, an open concrete block enclosure with a high wall (about 12'-0") was added on this west end. A partially-enclosed exterior shed has been appended to the northwest corner.

The first floor of the mill building has three rooms. The largest room, and probably the oldest, is located in the northeast corner and has a wood floor and stone walls. Large beveled, mortise-and-tenoned wood beams run the length of the ceiling. At the south wall, a deep, linear trough that may have served as an overflow area is now filled with debris and standing water. This large room with trough appears to have been the first part of the mill to be built. An arched opening with stone headers is evident in the south wall of this trough area. On the south side of this wall is another, deeper trough area that served as the wheel pit. It is also partially filled with water and contains the remains of a wheel axle supported by a stone pier. On the upper south wall of the wheel pit is a rectangular opening which served as the entrance for the headrace into the wheel pit. The size and description of the trough on the first floor, approximately 10' x 40', makes it a major element of the ground floor of the building. Inaccessibility hindered examination to further determine what its function was in the powering of the mill. The depth of this feature could not be determined due to the presence of debris.

Two other rooms were added behind and to the west of the main northeast block. These two open rooms also exhibit stone walls, and have concrete floors. The northwest room has a

chimney in the southwest corner. The larger room, which is directly behind the wheel pit area, has a bank of wood closets on the east wall. Neither room appears to have housed machinery. However, it is possible that the chimney in the northwest room may have been used as the flue for roasting the flax seed, a necessary step in linseed oil production. Two stairways, one in the southeast corner of the main block, and one in the southwest corner of the building, lead to the second floor.

On the second floor there are a total of eight rooms. The principal second floor space is the northeast room, which has exposed wood framing and contains shelving and probably served as a supply area. The other rooms on the second floor of the mill apparently were used for offices and storage. Some of them, such as the room in the southeast corner, have beaded, horizontal siding and a glazed wall. Other rooms on the west side of the mill have wood wainscoting and fluted wood trim with bulls' eye designs around the doorways and windows. Others, such as the room in the far northwest corner, are plain, with a drywall ceiling and plastered walls.

The third floor contains five rooms. The largest room in the main block is found in the northeast part of the building and probably served as a storage area for raw materials. The wood framing is exposed, including heavy, beveled wood posts. Floor boards are of random width. The hoist system was located in the peak of the gable on the east wall. In the floor near the east wall, a large square opening was observed leading up to the hoist. While this principal room is clearly a plain, functional space, the smaller rooms behind and to the west of it have decorative appointments such as fluted wood door surrounds and base boards. One other room has wood planking on the walls, and another has stuccoed walls and a replastered ceiling. The fourth floor (attic level) was inacessible in 1995.

B. Myers House

The Myers house is a 40' x 30' frame vernacular I-house. The three-bay main block is one room deep and two rooms wide, and rises two and one-half stories. On the east elevation is a square, two-story bay window with gable roof. A two-story ell extends from the northeast side of the house. A full front porch with a hipped roof with plain, replacement posts and a parged foundation is located on the south elevation. The side-gabled roof and the porch roof are covered with grey slate shingles, reported to have been removed from the eastern half of the mill. The main roof has overhanging eaves with a molded fascia.

The three-bay house is covered with horizontal, overlapping wood siding and has a centered, single-leaf door. Windows, including the bay windows on the east end of the house, are the two-over-two-light sash type with wood frames and dripcaps and shutters at the second floor. The first floor windows have been boarded up, and a paired window on the west side of the door appears to have been replaced. The west gable end is blank except for two small windows in the attic. Small, interior brick chimneys rise from the west gable end and from the ell, and a later

concrete block chimney has been added at the junction of the ell and the north wall of the main block.

The house is banked into the hillside. The foundation is built of rubble brownstone with cut quoins laid with mortar. There are basement windows on all sides of the house except the front (south) side. A datestone is set into the north wall (rear) of the ell. The stone inscribed with "1877", with "t e H w" just above and to the east of it. The inscriptions are upside down. The inscription is somewhat crude with the exception of the "H", which is the work of a more skilled mason.

On the front of the house (southeast corner) is a small addition which covers a well beneath it. On the north (rear) side, a small two-story section has been added at the junction of the ell and the main block to contain bathrooms on both the first and second floors. In addition to the bathrooms, the house has been modernized in portions of the interior. A new kitchen was installed in the first floor ell.

The main block consists of a living room and dining room on the first floor and bedrooms on the second floor. An open stair with fancy turned balusters and newel post are situated near the center of the house. On the west wall of the living room is a small brick hearth with stove pipe, and radiators have been installed throughout the house. Walls and ceilings are plastered. The dining room is situated on the east side of the house near the bay windows. The bay window area features a rounded arch alcove on both first and second floors.

The upstairs is divided by hallways and contains a total of three bedrooms, most of which have repaneled walls and baseboard heating fixtures. These rooms contain elements from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The bedrooms have two-part wood doors with tongue-ingroove panels. The door leading to a small storage room in the hallway is made of beaded horizontal boards, and has a decorative latch. Other doors, such as the hall and bathroom doors, are the modern, single-leaf or louvered types. The hallway walls are partially covered with replaced composition paneling.

The northeast bedroom has an arched alcove at the bay window. Part of the room still features simple wood baseboards, and a fancy iron grate is extant on the floor. The southeast bedroom walls have been entirely repanelled and stucco has been applied to the ceiling. The attic entrance is at the end of the hallway on the east end of the house.

The inside entrance to the basement of the house is accessed by steps which have been added near the kitchen. Inspection of the full basement shows both hand-hewn logs with pegged mortise and tenon joints, as well as machine sawn members with wire nails.

The inside entrance to the basement of the house is accessed by steps which have been added near the kitchen. Inspection of the full basement shows both hand-hewn logs with pegged mortise and tenon joints, as well as machine sawn members with wire nails.

The initials carved on the "datestone" may refer to the miller or other resident of the house. It may also refer to the initials of one or more of the deceased William King's children, such as Eliza Hoffman, Sarah Williams, and Mary Taylor. One of the King descendants may have built the house after the property was divided and sold in 1870. Since the mill was in full operation between 1870 until Joseph King's death in 1886, the operation may have required a new miller's or worker's house during that time. After the oil mill was converted to a distillery, an 1893 deed for the property makes reference to the house and includes an exception assuring the right of one Hannah Butler to live in the "house" on the property (Porter 1989:2-9; Hunt. Co. Deed 237 6). The "bouse" probably refers to the dwelling on the Myers property. Therefore, it is also possible that Samuel C. Stevenson, who owned the mill between 1888-1892, was responsible for the house being constructed or moved during his ownership. Maps and atlases of the time period show a dwelling south of Lower Kingtown Road across from the mill. This structure is marked "W.L. King" on the Beers atlas. As this structure is no longer present, Porter (1989:2-5, 2-12) suggests that it was moved onto the Myers property sometime prior to 1893 and is the structure presently identified as the Myers house. Research has been inconclusive in determining the history of the structure.

C. Warehouse

The large, concrete block building is located to the west of the mill. This single-story structure measures approximately 150' x 50' and is partially banked into the hillside. It has a gently pitched gable roof, with several ventilators and a small clerestory on top. The doorway has been covered with plywood and there are very few windows; two on the long side of the building and two on the gable end. These metal-sash windows have metal bars over them. The building was constructed in the 1930s as a bonded warehouse for apple brandy produced by Lord Stirling Distilleries who owned the site at that time and is currently in a deteriorated condition. A hedge of overgrown yew bushes along the south wall obscures the warehouse from Lower Kingtown Road.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Historic Views

A 1940s photograph taken during a bridge survey contains a partial view of the east gable end of the mill. This photograph is located at the Office of the County Engineer of Hunterdon County.

A 1952 photograph of the south elevation of the mill is presented in Weiss, 1954.

Interior and exterior photographs from 1995 are located at the offices of Richard Grubb and Associates, 66 N. Main Street, Cranbury, New Jersey. Several of these photographs are reproduced beginning on page 23.

B. Primary and Unpublished Sources

Hunterdon County Deeds, Hunterdon County Hall of Records, Flemington, N.J.

Hunterdon County Inventories, Hunterdon County Hall of Records, Flemington, N.J.

Hunterdon County Letters of Administration, Hunterdon County Hall of Records, Flemington, N.J.

Hunterdon County Mortgages, Hunterdon County Hall of Records, Flemington, N.J.

Hunterdon County Road Returns, Hunterdon County Hall of Records, Flemington, N.J.

Hunterdon County Surrogate's Dockets, Hunterdon County Hall of Records, Flemington, N.J.

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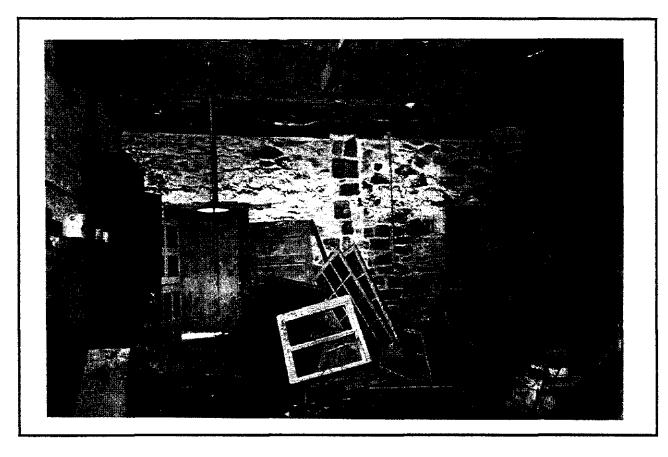
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D. Supplemental Material

Although the interior of the mill is inaccessible, interior photographs were taken of the mill in 1995. Selected views are reproduced in this report.



Kingtown Mill, interior ground floor, view of northeast section of building, facing east. Note stairway adjacent to stone wall on right of photo.

Date: May 9, 1995

Photographer: Lauren C. Archibald



Kingtown Mill, interior ground floor. View of southwest corner of main block, showing deep recessed trough area. View looking southwest.

Date: May 9, 1995



Kingtown Mill, interior ground floor, view of framing and stone arch (near lower center of photograph). Main block of building, facing southeast in recessed (possible secondary wheel pit) area.

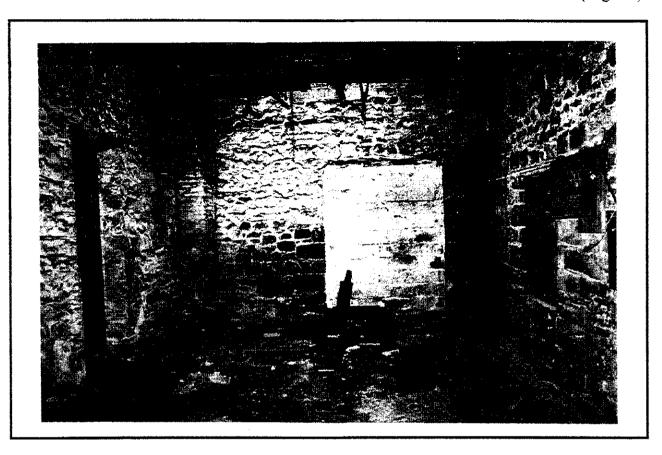
Date: May 9, 1995

Photographer: Lauren C. Archibald



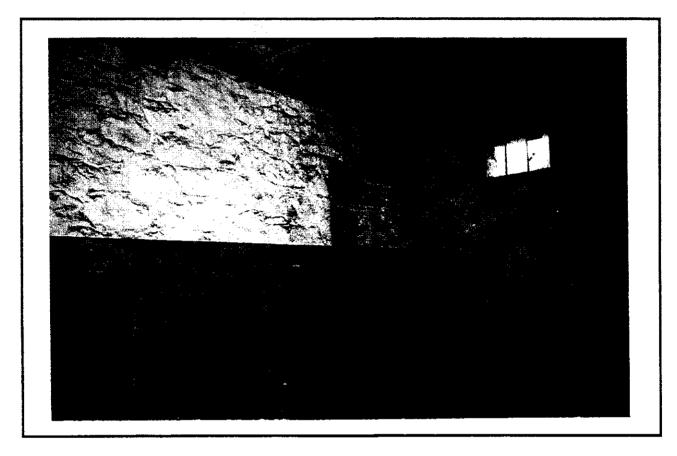
Kingtown Mill, view of wheel pit on south side of building, showing machinery and stone support on left of photograph. Note two bevel gear wheels.

Date: May 9, 1995



Kingtown Mill, interior, ground floor, northwest room, view of west and south walls. Note chimney in corner on left of photograph, and sealed door and window openings.

Date: May 9, 1995



Kingtown Mill, interior ground floor, southwest room. View of west and south walls. Wood closets in foreground.

Date: May 9, 1995



Kingtown Mill, interior second floor. Main block (northeast room), view toward northwest, showing shelving and storage area.

Date: May 9, 1995

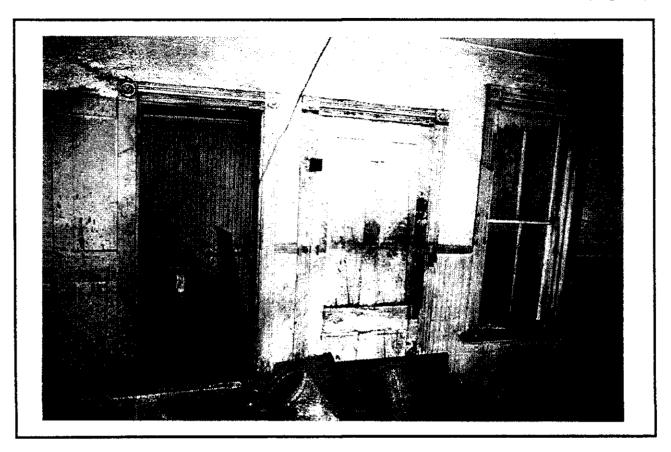
Photographer: Lauren C. Archibald



Kingtown Mill, interior second floor addition on south side of main block of mill building. View of southeast room, looking northwest. Note glass partitions and beaded wood panelling in wall.

Date: May 9, 1995

Photographer: Lauren C. Archibald



Kingtown Mill, interior second floor. View looking at south wall of southwest room, showing wainscotting and decorative door surrounds.

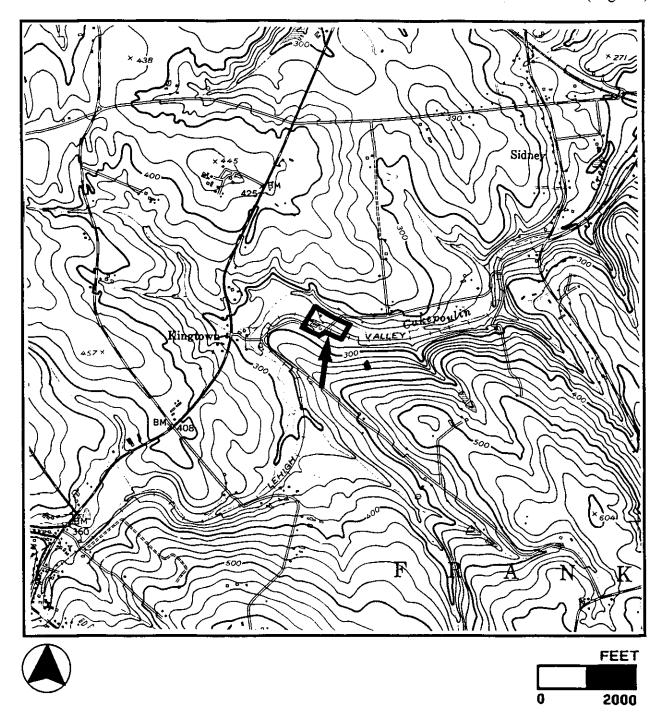
Date: May 9, 1995



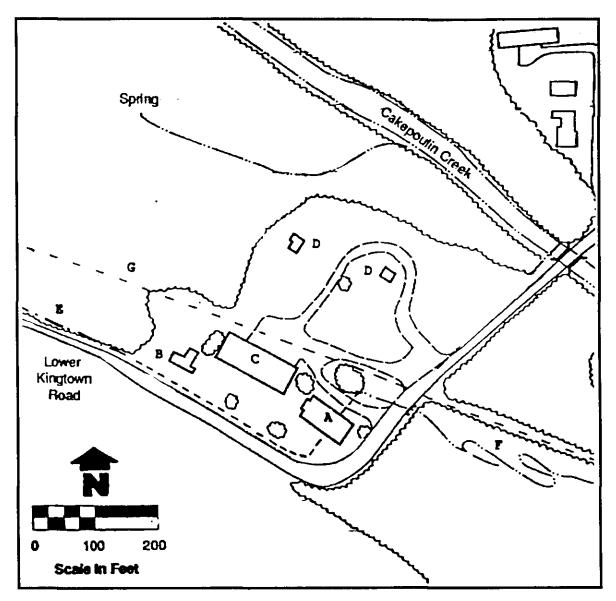
Kingtown Mill, interior, third floor. Shows overview of floor and framing system. Note beveled support posts.

Date: May 9, 1995

Photographer: Lauren C. Archibald



U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle: Pittstown, N.J., photorevised 1970. Arrow indicates the location of the Myers Property Site.



Kingtown Mill site. A = Mill; B = Myers House; C = Warehouse; D = Outbuildings; E = Headrace; F = Tailrace; G = Former railroad spur. Adapted from Porter 1989.

